



Kevin Polston
Superintendent of Schools

Office of Superintendent

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December 15, 2021

Dear KPS Families,

As we go into the holiday season and increasingly hear about the Omicron variant, we wanted to provide a brief health and safety update. Let me begin with a word of thanks for your continued partnership with us regarding the wellbeing of our students. Together, we are making a positive difference in our community.

As of December 8, the statistics are as follows:

- Student cases*: 21 (in the last 7 days) 131 (in November)
- Staff cases*: 8 (in the last 7 days) 30 (in November)
- Positivity rate**: 19.5% (Kent County last 7 days)
- Transmission rate**: 441 (Number of cases per 100,000 last 7 days)
- Outbreaks: 2 (Year to date)
- School closings: 0 (Year to date)
- Vaccine rates in Kentwood**:
 - Ages 12-16: 48%
 - Ages 17+: 74%

*Source: Kent ISD [Dashboard](#)

**Source: Kent County Health Department COVID [Dashboard](#)

When comparing these statistics with those we published in early November, it is evident that there has been an uptick in some of the numbers. We will continue to monitor infection rates and use data to make decisions about our mitigation strategies. We will update you as quickly as possible when changes are needed.

Considering the numbers and the arrival of the Omicron variant (with its higher transmission rate), we will continue to require face coverings for students and staff when we return from the holiday break. This helps contain both the transmission of COVID-19 and the spread of colds, flu and other diseases. We will also continue to use other strategies such as vaccination for eligible staff and students, increased ventilation, increased cleaning of high touch areas, self-screening for symptoms associated with COVID-19, regular hand washing and sanitizing, and social distancing.

I'm excited to share one change to our mitigation plan that will take effect after the holidays. Beginning Monday, January 3rd, KPS will welcome volunteers back into our schools! Similar to daily substitute teachers, volunteers must complete a background check, conduct a daily self-screening for symptoms associated with COVID-19, and properly wear a face covering while indoors in school buildings. If a volunteer exhibits any symptoms associated with COVID-19, volunteers will not be allowed to come into school.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep our children safe and healthy. Your diligence helps students remain in the classroom and keeps our community safe. I hope you and your family enjoy health, peace and joy in this holiday season!

Go Falcons!

Kevin Polston